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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [KPKO](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KJUS](#) [PY](#)

SUBJECT: KOSOVO: SWIFT RESPONSE BY UNMIK AND KFOR CALMS  
TENSIONS FOLLOWING A GRENADE ATTACK IN MITROVICA

REF: A. LASKARIS-OPS CENTER TELCON OF 08/26/06

[1](#)B. KAIDANOW-HOH E-MAIL OF 08/28/06

Classified By: COM TINA S. KAIDANOW FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Swift action by UNMIK, KFOR, and the Kosovo Police Service prevented an escalation of violence following an August 26 grenade attack on a well-known cafe frequented by hard-line Serbs in north Mitrovica. Nine people sustained injuries, though none life-threatening, in the attack: seven local Serbs plus two expatriates. A Kosovar Albanian woman driving through the area was subsequently attacked by a Serb crowd gathered near the cafe, and she remains in serious but stable condition in the Pristina hospital. A 16 year old Kosovo Albanian male was taken into custody by UNMIK for the grenade attack and is being held in a juvenile detention facility in Ljipjan. The Kosovar political leadership quickly condemned the attack. The Kosovo Serb leadership has been restrained in its reaction, and in initial interaction with UNMIK acted constructively to get past the violence. DATT and Pol/Econ Chief traveled August 29 to Mitrovica to meet the CivPol regional commander, who noted in particular that the actions of Nebojsa Jovic, north Mitrovica leader of the Serbian National Council, had done much to calm the situation after the incident. We will follow developments as they relate both to the security situation in Mitrovica and our own security posture in the area. End summary.

Kosovar Albanian Lobs Hand Grenade into Cafe in North Mitrovica

[1](#)2. (SBU) At 1855 local time August 26, a grenade exploded just outside the Dolce Vita Cafe, a well-known establishment located on the northern side of the main bridge connecting north and south Mitrovica. The Dolce Vita is frequented by hardline Serb leaders and serves as the main base of the "bridgewatchers" -- Serbian security police personnel, local thugs, and others who maintain an interest in the traffic crossing the main bridge in the town. Seven Kosovo Serbs were wounded in the attack, one of whom was a Serbian language specialist working for UNMIK CivPol. A British CivPol officer and a Dutch employee of a local bank were also injured. None of the injuries were life-threatening. A crowd that ultimately grew to some 500 people gathered, and

in a vengeful mood threw rocks at a passing car driven by a Kosovar Albanian woman. She sustained head injuries and is reported to be in serious but stable condition in Pristina hospital. Subsequently, the strong and visible UNMIK Civpol and KFOR presence helped to defuse tensions and the crowd dispersed peacefully later in the evening. The bridge was closed to traffic and remains so at this time.

13. (SBU) Shortly after the attack, police arrested a 16 year old Albanian male -- Adem Jetullah Dibrani -- as the suspected perpetrator. According to initial UNMIK CivPol and press reports, Dibrani's family members are well known to have extremist connections. Both the father, Jetullah Dibrani, and older brother, Baki Dibrani, are also reportedly connected to criminal activity. Acting UNMIK SRSG Steve Schook told COM and other Contact Group representatives August 29 that three witnesses had identified the youth, and that there was film footage to corroborate. Because the perpetrator was a juvenile, he was remanded for 30 days to a youth correctional facility in Ljipjan; UNMIK DOJ will continue the investigation and bring charges against him as warranted by law. COM stressed to Schook and DOJ head Al Moscovitz that it would be important to pursue the course of justice in this case as a reassurance to the Serb community in north Mitrovica and elsewhere in Kosovo, and the two agreed swift action was necessary.

#### Reactions to the Attack Subdued

14. (U) Understanding the danger posed by this incident, the office of Prime Minister Ceku was quick to issue an unequivocal condemnation of the attack, noting that the government "believes that today, now more than ever, it is necessary for citizens to cooperate with the institutions of

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law and order in order to identify and capture the culprits ... the Government calls on all Kosovars to maintain calm and not to fall for provocations from those in Kosovo who want violence and suffering for all." The Kosovar negotiating team issued a similar statement after their meeting August 27.

15. (U) Kosovo's Serb leadership also played a constructive role in calming tensions after the attack. In an August 27 sit-down with UNMIK and KFOR, representatives of the northern Kosovo Serb community (including Nebojsa Jovic of the Serb National Council and Milan Ivanovic) made a series of requests with regard to increased security on and around the bridge, most of which UNMIK deemed reasonable and were implemented without delay. Ivanovic also asked that the bridge be closed to traffic until after the status process concludes; Schook would not agree to impede freedom of movement in this way indefinitely, but indicated that the bridge would not be reopened until the security environment dictated such a move. Schook told CG reps that the first security assessment would be undertaken on Wednesday, August 30, and decisions would be taken in coordination with the Serb leadership.

Comment: A Bullet Dodged

16. (C) This incident could easily have spread to broader violence, but -- fortunately -- did not. Swift UNMIK CivPol, KPS and KFOR action, including the apprehension of a suspect, defused the situation in its immediate aftermath, and the condemnations from across the political spectrum also contributed to calming the environment. The restrained and productive reaction of the Kosovar Serb leadership also gives cause for hope that Serbs can play a positive role in cooperating with the international community and Kosovar authorities. Still, tensions will remain elevated within the Serb community, not only in the north but in enclaves south of the Ibar. We will press UNMIK to pursue the case against the perpetrator with vigor, and we will continue our interaction with the Serb community in all parts of Kosovo to assuage some of their concerns. End comment.

